

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-51 and 53-55 are pending in the application. The Examiner has allowed claims 37-44. The Examiner has rejected claims 1-3, 5, 6, 14, 19, 23-33, 35, 45-48, 50, and 53-55. The Examiner has objected to claims 4, 7-13, 15-18, 20-22, 34, 36, 49, and 51. Applicant has amended claims 1, 10, 12, 21, and 45. Applicant has cancelled claims 9 and 49. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of pending claims 1-8, 10-36, 45-48, 50, 51, and 53-55.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-3, 5, 6, 14, 19, 23, 27, 29-33, 35, 45-48, 50, 54, and 55 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,978,398, issued to Harper et al. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Regarding claims 1-8 and 10-36, Applicant has amended claim 1 to include the limitations of claim 9, to which the Examiner had objected but indicated would be allowable if it were amended to include the limitations of its base claim and any intervening claims. Thus, Applicant submits claims 1-8 and 10-36 are in condition for allowance.

Regarding claim 54, Applicant has amended claim 54. Thus, Applicant submits claim 54 is in condition for allowance.

Regarding claim 2, Applicant notes Applicant has amended claim 1 from which claim 2 depends. Thus, Applicant submits claim 2 is also in condition for allowance.

Regarding claim 3, Applicant notes Applicant has amended claim 1 from which claim 3 depends. Thus, Applicant submits claim 3 is also in condition for allowance.

Regarding claim 5, Applicant notes Applicant has amended claim 1 from which claim 5 depends. Thus, Applicant submits claim 5 is in condition for allowance.

Regarding claim 6, Applicant notes Applicant has amended claim 1 from which claim 6 depends. Thus, Applicant submits claim 6 is in condition for allowance.

Regarding claim 14, Applicant notes Applicant has amended claim 1 from which claim 14 depends. Thus, Applicant submits claim 14 is in condition for allowance.

Regarding claim 19, Applicant notes Applicant has amended claim 1 from which claim 19 depends. Thus, Applicant submits claim 19 is in condition for allowance.

Regarding claim 23, Applicant notes Applicant has amended claim 1 from which claim 23 depends. Thus, Applicant submits claim 23 is in condition for allowance.

Regarding claim 27, Applicant notes Applicant has amended claim 1 from which claim 27 depends. Thus, Applicant submits claim 27 is in condition for allowance.

Regarding claim 29, Applicant notes Applicant has amended claim 1 from which claim 29 depends. Thus, Applicant submits claim 29 is in condition for allowance.

Regarding claim 30, Applicant notes Applicant has amended claim 1 from which claim 30 depends. Thus, Applicant submits claim 30 is also in condition for allowance.

Regarding claim 31, Applicant notes Applicant has amended claim 1 from which claim 31 depends. Thus, Applicant submits claim 31 is in condition for allowance.

Regarding claim 32, Applicant notes Applicant has amended claim 1 from which claim 32 depends. Thus, Applicant submits claim 32 is in condition for allowance.

Regarding claim 33, Applicant notes Applicant has amended claim 1 from which claim 33 depends. Thus, Applicant submits claim 33 is in condition for allowance.

Regarding claim 35, Applicant notes Applicant has amended claim 1 from which claim 35 depends. Thus, Applicant submits claim 35 is in condition for allowance.

Regarding claims 45-48 and 50-53, Applicant has amended claim 45 and cancelled claim 49. Thus, Applicant submits claims 45-48 and 50-53 are in condition for allowance.

Regarding claim 46, Applicant notes Applicant has amended claim 45 from which claim 46 depends. Thus, Applicant submits claim 46 is in condition for allowance.

Regarding claim 47, Applicant notes Applicant has amended claim 45 from which claim 47 depends. Thus, Applicant submits claim 47 is in condition for allowance.

Regarding claim 48, Applicant notes Applicant has amended claim 45 from which claim 48 depends. Thus, Applicant submits claim 48 is in condition for allowance.

Regarding claim 50, Applicant notes Applicant has amended claim 45 from which claim 50 depends. Thus, Applicant submits claim 50 is in condition for allowance.

Regarding claim 55, Applicant reiterates Applicant's previously submitted arguments with respect to the allowability of claim 55. Thus, Applicant submits claim 55 is in condition for allowance.

The Examiner has rejected claims 24, 25, 26, 28, and 53 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Harper '398 (which the Examiner states incorporates by reference Harper '398 '266 [sic]) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,771,440 of Smith. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Regarding claim 24, Applicant notes Applicant has amended claim 1 from which claim 24 depends. Thus, Applicant submits claim 24 is also in condition for allowance.

Regarding claim 25, Applicant notes Applicant has amended claim 1 from which claim 25 depends. Thus, Applicant submits claim 25 is also in condition for allowance.

Regarding claim 26, Applicant notes Applicant has amended claim 1 from which claim 26 depends. Thus, Applicant submits claim 26 is also in condition for allowance.

Regarding claim 53, Applicant notes Applicant has amended claim 45 from which claim 53 depends. Thus, Applicant submits claim 53 is in condition for allowance.

Regarding claim 28, Applicant notes Applicant has amended claim 1 from which claim 28 depends. Thus, Applicant submits claim 28 is also in condition for allowance.

The Examiner has objected to claims 4, 7-13, 15-18, 20-22, 34, 36, 49, and 51 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but states they would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant has presented arguments for the allowability of claims from which the objected claims depend. Applicant has cancelled claims 9 and 49. Thus, Applicant submits claims 4, 7, 8, 10-13, 15-18, 20-22, 34, 36, and 51 are in condition for allowance.

The Examiner states claims 37-44 are allowable.

In conclusion, Applicant has overcome all of the Office's rejections, and early notice of allowance to this effect is earnestly solicited. If, for any reason, the Office is unable to allow the Application on the next Office Action, and believes a telephone interview would be helpful, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date



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